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Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session

Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its fifty-ninth session in New York from 27 February to 1 March 2013 and its sixtieth session in Geneva from 26 to 28 June 2013. The Board focused its deliberations during its sessions on the following substantive items on its agenda: (a) the relations between nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing regional and global security; and (b) disarmament and security implications of emerging technologies.

The Board had an in-depth exchange of views on the first item and recommended that the Secretary-General continue to emphasize the important role of the nuclear-weapon-free zones for regional and international peace and security, disarmament and non-proliferation, and should take the lead in promoting and further strengthening the existing zones. The Secretary-General should also encourage all nuclear-weapon States to extend formal endorsement to all zones, as appropriate. The Secretary-General should promote closer interaction and cooperation among the nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the possible creation of a platform/forum that would allow representatives of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones to exchange experiences on the lessons learned from the zones, their benefits and limitations. The Secretary-General should explore the challenges and all relevant aspects to the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and should encourage further participation of think tanks and civil society in the efforts aimed at exploring new avenues and searching for common ground in order to overcome current deadlocks. The Secretary-General should strongly support all efforts aimed at the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and should take the lead in organizing a preparatory meeting for the conference

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on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons. The Secretary-General should also encourage all steps to promote confidence-building and constructive dialogue among the States of the region with the objective of breaking the current impasse. The Secretary-General should also consider appropriate action for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in North-East Asia, including by promoting a more active role for the regional forums in encouraging transparency and confidence-building among the countries of the region.

The Board held an active exchange on the second agenda item at both its 2013 sessions, as well as during the intersessional period. The Board was of the view that the United Nations should be seized of the implications on international peace and security of rapidly emerging new technologies and recommended that the Secretary-General should take this issue in hand and emphasize the possible inherent dangers of weapon systems whose course of action is determined by machine algorithms and encourage efforts aimed at promoting increased transparency in this field, but should also note the value of emerging technologies in the service of peace and security. In particular, the Secretary-General should urge compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and disarmament and should consider commissioning a comprehensive study that would constitute an in-depth analysis on the emerging technological trends and the legal, ethical and other aspects of and limits to the development, proliferation and use of the increasingly autonomous weapons technology. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and other research and think tanks should be part of such an effort. On the basis of this study, the Secretary-General should promote coordinated efforts in an existing forum, such as the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, or through the establishment within the United Nations framework of a structured intergovernmental dialogue and formalized exchange on the emerging technologies to address the possible need for disarmament measures in respect of potential future fully autonomous systems.

Serving as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Advisory Board approved the submission of the report of the Director of the Institute on its activities from August 2012 to July 2013 and the proposed programme of work and estimated budget for 2013 and 2014 to the General Assembly and recommended the continuing subvention from the United Nations regular budget for the biennium 2014-2015. The Board reiterated its earlier recommendation that the subvention level be increased, in addition to being cost adjusted, to fully fund all core staff costs, as a requisite for providing the stability needed to allow the Institute to pursue the structure and programme of work justified by its vision and mission. The Board approved the report by the UNIDIR Director entitled "A sustainable funding structure for UNIDIR" for submission to the Secretariat. The Board also agreed on the establishment of a subgroup to manage the process of succession for the Director of UNIDIR. The Board heard briefings on the change management proposals that may impact UNIDIR, but was not persuaded that the key principles of autonomy and independence would be upheld in the putative new structure. The Board was doubtful that the outline plan, as it appears to affect UNIDIR, would enable the Institute to flourish in terms of both effective fundraising and original research and remained concerned that there is a risk that the value of UNIDIR to the disarmament community would instead be significantly reduced. The Board expressed dissatisfaction with the absence of any proper consultation since the start of change management proposals.

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its fifty-ninth session in New York from 27 February to 1 March 2013 and its sixtieth session in Geneva from 26 to 28 June 2013. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 O. The report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), approved by the Advisory Board serving as its Board of Trustees, has been submitted in document A/68/182.

2. Desmond Bowen (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) presided over the two sessions of the Board in 2013.

3. The present report summarizes the deliberations of the Board during the two sessions and the specific recommendations it conveyed to the Secretary-General.

II. Substantive discussions and recommendations

A. The relations between nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing regional and global security

4. At its fifty-eighth session held in Geneva in July 2012, the Board briefly exchanged views on a number of possible issues for future discussions, including on the relations between different nuclear-weapon-free zones. Consequently, it was deemed to be timely for the Board to consider the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones by looking into the relations between the various existing zones and ongoing proposals for the creation of such zones, such as in the Middle East, and how such zones would help in advancing both regional and global security.

5. At the fifty-ninth session of the Board a "food-for-thought" paper was presented by Board member Togzhan Kassenova. A presentation was also made by a representative of civil society, Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, Senior Research Associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

6. The Board agreed that nuclear-weapon-free zones played an important role in promoting both regional and international security as well as non-proliferation, and further remarked on the opportunities for greater appreciation of the benefits brought by such zones.

7. The need for the nuclear-weapon States to fully endorse existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and their related Protocols for a number of such zones was underlined by several members. It was also mentioned that some countries in some of the zones made efforts to accommodate the nuclear-weapon States.

8. Some members stressed the importance of verification and compliance with some zones being better equipped to do so than others. Comments were made that certain regions lacked the capacity and means of monitoring compliance and, therefore, the international community and international organizations needed to assist such States in those regions to build up their capacities.

9. Given that each nuclear-weapon-free zone possessed its own characteristics, with some having weaker governance and compliance mechanisms than others, several Board members stressed the importance for nuclear-weapon-free zones to

discuss and compare models and to share lessons learned among themselves in order to reinforce their effectiveness and as models for the creation of new zones.

10. It was suggested by some Board members that the Secretary-General may wish to consider bringing together representatives of the different zones to discuss their respective experiences bearing in mind ongoing initiatives within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons context and in the Conference on Disarmament.

11. The Board also stressed that any discussion on nuclear-weapon-free zones could not ignore the question of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The current lack of progress related to the proposed conference on the zone was seen as mostly political and not technical in nature, particularly the lack of political will.

12. The Board agreed that the Secretary-General should give the matter of the conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction renewed priority and engage the interested parties actively by taking a leading role in order to break the impasse. It was also suggested that the Secretary-General together with the other three convenors continue to strongly support the efforts of the facilitator.

13. The Board also expressed support for a suggestion to request the Secretary-General to hold a preparatory meeting for the conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction that could help start the process of setting the dates of the proposed conference.

14. In connection with the proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions, such as North-East Asia, one member mentioned that, in order to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone, there should not be any serious security concerns among the States concerned, as well as a minimum level of confidence. Therefore, the creation of such a zone in North-East Asia was deemed difficult. Another member commented that, given the current strategic situation in South Asia, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region looked to be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

15. A comment was also made over the importance of maintaining strategic stability as a basis for the establishment and development of nuclear-weapon-free zones. It was stressed that without strategic stability, any discussions on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament were not possible.

16. The Board continued its deliberations on the relations between nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing regional and global security at its sixtieth session in Geneva in June 2013. The deliberations were based on a number of "food-for-thought" papers presented by four Board members: Togzhan Kassenova, Rut Diamint, Sung-joo Choi and Wael al-Assad.

17. Given the significant role played by nuclear-weapon-free zones in preventing the proliferation of the nuclear weapons and promoting regional and international peace, security and cooperation, the Board emphasized the importance of enhanced interaction and regular exchange of knowledge and information among the representatives of the zones on lessons learned, "gold standards" in terms of institutionalization, verification, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and others, and agreed that a platform was needed for fostering such an

exchange of knowledge and experience and cooperation among the zones. Different views were expressed on the exact format of and participation in such a forum. It was pointed out that such a platform should not replicate, but rather supplement, existing cooperation forums. The establishment of new zones would benefit from the lessons learned from the experience of the existing zones.

18. Members of the Board emphasized the important role played by the existing nuclear-weapon-free zone secretariats in supporting the implementation of the treaty regimes, promoting knowledge and understanding on the purposes and functioning of the nuclear-weapon-free zones, thereby enhancing the interregional cooperation between the zones and exchanges of lessons learned and experiences. The members of the Board encouraged such institutionalization for the zones that had not already developed similar mechanisms.

19. The Board commended the continued and valuable support provided by the United Nations to the nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the important role played by the regional organizations and existing regional mechanisms. It also welcomed the positive role of civil society in implementing, with limited resources, existing zones and promoting the establishment of future zones, the exchange of information and knowledge and developing new proposals.

20. The members of the Board agreed that the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones is a complex issue that is in the hands of the concerned States and depends on regional dynamics and the specific security situation in each geographic area. Once again, the need for constructive dialogue and confidence-building as necessary steps for the development of future zones in the Middle East and North-East Asia was emphasized. Concerns were expressed that the postponement of the conference on the zone in the Middle East is an additional source of tension in an already fragile region, which may further undermine the peace process. Members of the Board also stated that the postponement of the conference on the Middle East zone, unfulfilled commitments and lack of progress may hold the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty review process hostage.

21. The positive role that regional forums could play to promote the establishment of a zone in North-East Asia was mentioned by another Board member. Some members referred to the six-party talks as an appropriate mechanism in addressing denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, as well as peace and security in the peninsula.

22. Members of the Board referred to the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States, the disappointment that different zones were not treated equally in terms of negative security assurances, the need for political will and continued efforts for the conclusion of the still pending nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty protocols. A suggestion was made that the Secretary-General should also appeal to the other nuclear-weapon-possessing States to reconfirm in a more formal way their support and respect for the nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such unilateral declarations in this respect could be taken note of by the Security Council along the lines of Security Council resolution 984 of 11 April 1995. The need to address extended deterrence with some States in the context of the establishment of future nuclear-weapon-free zones was also raised. A member of the Board proposed establishing a no-growth zone, for example, in South Asia, which would prevent further increases in fissile materials stocks and nuclear warhead numbers.

23. **The Board made the following recommendations:**

(a) The Secretary-General should continue to emphasize the important role of the nuclear-weapon-free zones as an essential practical tool for regional and international peace and security, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Secretary-General should take a leading role in promoting and further strengthening the existing zones by encouraging the nuclear-weapon-free zones member States to consider and adopt the highest positive standards and practices developed by other nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Secretary-General should encourage the nuclear-weapon States to extend formal endorsement to all zones and their related protocols and promote constructive dialogue among all relevant stakeholders on any outstanding issue. The Secretary-General should also encourage appropriate formal commitment of the other nuclear-weapon-possessing States in support of the nuclear-weapon-free zones;

(b) The Secretary-General should promote closer interaction and cooperation among the nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the possible creation of a platform or forum that would allow representatives of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones to exchange experience on the lessons learned from the zones, their benefits and limitations. Regional and international organizations, think tanks and civil society organizations and networks should be part of this forum, as well as representatives of regions seeking the establishment of such future zones;

(c) The Secretary-General should consider appropriate ways to explore the challenges and all relevant aspects of the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones as a non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament tool. UNIDIR should be part of such an effort. The Secretary-General should also encourage further involvement of think tanks and civil society organizations and networks in the efforts aimed at exploring new avenues and searching for common ground in order to overcome current deadlocks;

(d) The Secretary-General should use his authority to support all efforts aimed at the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In particular, the Secretary-General could take the lead in organizing a preparatory meeting for the conference on the Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction as soon as possible and as a matter of priority. The Secretary-General should encourage all steps promoting confidence-building and constructive dialogue among the States from the region with the objective of breaking the current impasse and promoting peace and security in the region;

(e) The Secretary-General should also consider appropriate action for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in North-East Asia. In particular, the Secretary-General could promote a more active role for the regional forums in encouraging transparency and confidence-building among the countries of the region.

B. Disarmament and security implications of emerging technologies

24. The significant developments in technologies related to "unmanned and autonomous systems" have been receiving the growing attention of the international community as seen in the almost daily coverage of news in the international media, as well as in materials produced by many research institutes, of issues pertaining to the uses of unmanned aerial vehicles in particular. The use of such unmanned systems does not just cover military applications, but also encompasses a wider range of use for other non-military purposes, including law enforcement, border security and peacekeeping operations. Such technologies also potentially affect both international and domestic laws, as well as international humanitarian law.

25. During previous sessions of the Board, a number of members have regularly expressed the need for the Board to consider not only traditional disarmament and international security topics related to nuclear or conventional arms issues, but also emerging technologies that may have a significant impact on international peace and security. Moreover, the Board was considered as the appropriate body within the United Nations disarmament machinery to exchange views on such new technologies, particularly since all members are appointed by the Secretary-General to serve in their personal capacity. Consequently, the Secretary-General requested the Board to consider the implications of new technologies on disarmament and global security as the second item on its agenda for 2013.

26. At the fifty-ninth session of the Board, a briefing related to the topic of emerging technologies was provided by Michael Spies of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. A presentation was also made by Yousaf Mahmood Butt, a representative of civil society and Research Professor and Scientist-in-residence at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

27. The Board's exchange of views on the issue of emerging technologies and the implications on disarmament and security was dominated by the topic of unmanned aerial vehicles, but experienced considerable difficulties in focusing on any particular aspect of the issue. The need to clearly understand and identify the issues involved was emphasized by several members. The lack of a clear definition on unmanned aerial vehicles was also mentioned. Some members also commented that the topic of emerging technologies was too broad and required some further guidance in order to assist the Board to focus its deliberations.

28. The question of dual uses for such technologies was mentioned by many members and the discussions were largely dominated by concerns over the military applications of unmanned aerial vehicles, particularly armed drones. Differences were also expressed on whether the discussions should focus on current uses of unmanned aerial vehicles or on future developments in the related technologies, especially autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles.

29. The need to focus on definitions and legal frameworks on how the use of unmanned aerial vehicles would affect the relevant international laws and the rules of war was raised by some members. Concerns were also expressed over the need to reinforce existing codes of conduct and moral codes, as these new technologies progress rapidly, especially since the international community apparently lacked efficient tools to control such new technologies.

30. An opinion was expressed that, if particular emerging technologies had not yet been developed for military purposes, an effort should be made to prohibit such technologies rather than focusing on non-proliferation. The prohibitions against the uses of blinding laser weapons or the placement of weapons in outer space were cited as good examples by some Board members.

31. A comment was made that ongoing efforts by the United Nations to seek the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for peacekeeping missions made the Organization a stakeholder in this matter, which also gave the United Nations and the Secretary-General some leverage on the issue.

32. There were also divergent views on whether unmanned aerial vehicles were in fact different from manned aircraft. It was also mentioned that the problem of unmanned aerial vehicles was not an arms control issue and that the real problem was the usage of unmanned aerial vehicles against other States and the citizens of other States on foreign territory. The question was raised whether current or new arms control instruments could be used as a means of regulating unmanned aerial vehicles in the distant future.

33. The need to discuss how to promote non-proliferation efforts with regard to unmanned aerial vehicles was also mentioned, especially in respect to non-State actors. Concerns were expressed that the threshold for military engagement, particularly offensive operations, had been further lowered and about the possibility of an arms race owing to the broader uses of unmanned aerial vehicles, particularly armed systems.

34. Some members suggested a United Nations study on the humanitarian aspects of the use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles and what that means for the Organization. However, other members were cautious about the Board engaging in discussions of human rights implications of the use of unmanned aerial vehicles. Instead, given that technologies such as armed drones were developing rapidly, it was questioned whether these weapons were really changing the face of war so much that they should be included in the disarmament agenda. Another question was whether these unmanned systems would be capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction in the future.

35. At its sixtieth session, the Board continued its in-depth analysis of the disarmament and security implications of emerging technologies, as requested by the Secretary-General. Two Board members, Fred Tanner and Sung-joo Choi, presented "food-for-thought" papers on this item.

36. On the basis of past experience regarding the usefulness of engaging in intersessional dialogue among members, using various communication tools, such as the Internet or videoconferences, and creating subgroups to tackle specific items during the intersessional period, the Board, at its fifty-ninth session, established such a subgroup to focus on emerging technologies and prepare the debate of the sixtieth session. The subgroup was moderated by Fred Tanner. Members of the subgroup exchanged views and made substantial contributions to the debate during the intersessional period.

37. The Board received a briefing from Nils Melzer, Senior Programme Adviser and Senior Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, on the theme "International legal implications of drones and autonomous weapons".

38. The challenges to international peace and security posed by the emerging technologies were receiving growing attention by the international community. The members of the Board agreed that clear understanding was needed on what was referred to as "emerging technologies" in order to address the disarmament and security implications of these technologies. The Board considered three major categories: (i) human-controlled systems ("human-in-the-loop") that could perform tasks delegated to them independently; (ii) human-supervised systems ("human-on-the-loop") that could conduct targeting process independently, but theoretically remained under the real-time supervision of a human operator who can override automatic decisions; and (iii) autonomous systems ("human-out-of-the-loop") that can search, identify, select and attack targets without human control.

39. The Board addressed the unmanned aerial vehicles, also referred to as drones, as a specific type of unmanned robotic aircraft with various applications including military ones. The wide range of valuable unarmed applications for civilian, law enforcement and military purposes, such as reconnaissance and intelligence gathering or peacekeeping, was referred to by the members of the Board. It was emphasized that in recent years the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, including armed unmanned aerial vehicles, had increased most notably for the purpose of targeted killing operations. It was also underlined that while armed unmanned aerial vehicles were generally used for precision attacks against individually selected targets, their future use as delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction could not be excluded. The hacking or acquiring of drones by armed non-State actors was also referred to as a source of concern.

40. The members of the Board agreed that existing armed unmanned aerial vehicles are under the real-time remote control of a human operator. They are not inherently indiscriminate and the concerns expressed by the international community relate to the political, legal or security aspects of the way they are operated rather than to their design. Hence concerns associated with the use of drones are primarily an issue of the application of and respect for the existing law.

41. Looking at trends and future developments, the Board recognized the great potential and value of the emerging technologies in all civilian spheres of life. The Board also acknowledged the potential military utility of such systems, in particular, for verification, arms control and disarmament purposes.

42. On the other hand, the Board noted that the increasing trend towards automation of warfare and the development of fully autonomous weapon systems (also referred to as lethal autonomous robotics, LARs, or killer robots) gave rise to a wide range of legal, ethical or societal concerns that had to be addressed. These could include, inter alia, the ability of a fully autonomous system to conform to existing law (including international humanitarian law, human rights law or general international law); potential problems associated with the design of future fully autonomous weapons that could require disarmament action, or the ethical limits to robotic autonomy in deciding on the life or death of a human, to quote just a few.

43. In terms of applicability of international humanitarian law, it was emphasized that over the last years international humanitarian law has adequately responded to new emerging challenges through the application of the basic principles and existing norms. It was acknowledged, however, that the new emerging technologies might give rise to completely new challenges, hence the importance of holding an extensive informed discussion on them. It was pointed out that States have

responsibilities to ensure that new weapons are compatible with international humanitarian law in accordance with article 36 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.[1]

44. It was underlined that the international community had the rare opportunity and responsibility to react preventively, if necessary, and that this requires prompt action owing to the rapid and unpredictable development of technology. Against this background, the Board agreed that a comprehensive study of the various aspects of the emerging technologies that could be used for military purposes should be carried on as soon as possible to clarify the potential threats and challenges and identify necessary action that could lead to a constructive outcome for the benefit of peace and security. The need for a forum for an intergovernmental dialogue on this issue, such as the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects of 1980,[2] that could also engage in legislative action, if necessary, was also emphasized, as well as for more transparency on new military or dual-use technological developments and national policies.

45. Several members of the Board stated that the high-speed development of new autonomous technologies was a complicated and multidimensional issue. There were three major aspects: technology, policy and law. On one side there was the extremely rapid development of technology and on the other side the slow evolution of the law governing these matters. This dichotomy means the political approach is essential to guiding future technological developments.

46. **The Board made the following recommendations:**

(a) **The United Nations should be seized of the implications for international peace and security of rapidly emerging new technologies. The Secretary-General should take this issue in hand and approach it from international humanitarian law, human rights and disarmament perspectives. In particular, the Secretary-General should emphasize the possible inherent dangers of weapon systems whose course of action is determined by machine algorithms and therefore should encourage efforts aimed at promoting increased transparency in this field. On the other hand, the Secretary-General should also note the value of emerging technologies in the service of peace and security, now and in the future;**

(b) **The Secretary-General should use his authority to urge compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and disarmament commitments;**

(c) **The Secretary-General should consider commissioning a comprehensive study. The study should constitute an in-depth analysis on the emerging technological trends and the legal, ethical and other aspects of and limits to the development, proliferation and use of the increasingly autonomous weapons technology. UNIDIR and other research and think tanks should be part of such an effort;**

(d) **The Secretary-General should, based on the further study and better understanding of the issue by the international community, promote**

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1125, No. 17512.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1342, No. 22495.

coordinated efforts in an existing forum, such as the Conventional Weapons Convention, or through the establishment within the United Nations framework of a structured intergovernmental dialogue and formalized exchange on the emerging technologies among Member States to address the possible need for disarmament measures in respect of potential future fully autonomous systems. Such a consensus-oriented approach could result in a code of conduct, a road map or other tools and should involve Governments and relevant stakeholders from industry, research, academia and civil society.

III. Presentations by civil society and non-governmental organizations

47. As is customary, the Board heard presentations on issues pertaining to its agenda from representatives of non-governmental organizations. At its fifty-ninth session, Yousaf Butt, Research Professor and Scientist-in-residence at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, Senior Research Associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, gave briefings to the Board.

48. At its sixtieth session, the Board heard presentations from Alyn Ware, Director of Basel Peace Office, and Global Coordinator for Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and Maya Brehm, Consultant with Article 36, and Researcher at Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

IV. Presentation by the International Committee of the Red Cross

49. The Board heard presentations on issues pertaining to its agenda from a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). At its sixtieth session, Kathleen Lawand, Head of Arms Unit, Legal Division, ICRC, gave a briefing to the Board.

V. Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

50. At its fifty-ninth session, the Advisory Board, sitting as the Board of Trustees, received a briefing from the Director of UNIDIR on the work of the Institute since the previous session of the Board in July 2012, and an update on its programme of work for 2013. The Board also exchanged views on a draft sustainable funding strategy paper prepared by UNIDIR and provided comments and advice on the paper.

51. A briefing was also given by the Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, Sally Fegan-Wyles, on the change management proposals that may impact UNIDIR. This was the first exchange on the subject involving the Board of Trustees, and the dialogue was appreciated.

Nonetheless, the Board expressed regret that the start of the dialogue had been so long delayed. The information provided had not persuaded the Board that the key principles of autonomy and independence would be upheld in the putative new structure. The Board of Trustees agreed that the Chair should write a letter to the Secretary-General in the pursuance of issues arising from that briefing.

52. At its sixtieth session, the Board of Trustees received a briefing by video link by Assistant Secretary-General Kim Won-soo, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Change Implementation, on the draft change management proposal involving UNIDIR. He gave assurances that the operational autonomy and research independence of UNIDIR (established by statute) would be preserved, but offered no evidence of how that would be achieved once UNIDIR was embedded in a management structure reporting to a new Assistant Secretary-General post with its own governing board. The prospective role of the Board, which is mandated to govern the Institute, was not clarified. The Assistant Secretary-General promised to provide, for the first time, a written proposal, on which he invited the Board's comments, notwithstanding that the Board is not scheduled to meet again until March 2014.

53. While the Board strongly supports the Secretary-General's objectives for reform, it is also intent upon enhancing the valuable contribution of UNIDIR to the United Nations disarmament machinery and policy development. The Board was dissatisfied with the absence of any proper consultation since the start of change planning in the summer of 2012; it was also doubtful that the outline plan, as it appears to affect UNIDIR, would enable the Institute to flourish in terms of both effective fundraising and original research. Indeed, the Board remained concerned that there is a risk that the value of UNIDIR to the disarmament community would instead be significantly reduced.

54. The Director of UNIDIR presented the revised sustainable finance plan, requested by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations on 12 June 2012, which took into account the comments received at the fifty-ninth session of the Board. The Board considered the revised plan and provided comments and advice on alternative methods of financing, such as private funding or seconded senior research fellows, as well as on the most sustainable funding model for the Institute.

55. The Board approved the report of the UNIDIR Director on the theme "A sustainable funding structure for UNIDIR", dated 17 June 2013, for submission to the Secretariat and endorsed option 1, as contained therein (core staff fully funded from the regular budget) as the most sustainable funding model for the Institute.

56. The Director of the Institute briefed the Board members on the work of the Institute since the Board session in February 2013 and planned activities for 2014 and beyond, and on the proposed programme of work and budget, including a request for a continuing subvention from the United Nations regular budget.

57. The Board strongly commended the broad range of research activities carried out by UNIDIR and praised, in particular, the ability of the Institute and its staff to generate useful thinking on various disarmament issues.

58. The Board engaged again in an in-depth discussion on the challenges faced by the Institute over funding and what could be done to ameliorate the situation. The importance of adequate funding for the Institute was reiterated. The Board continued to urge the Member States and the Secretariat to provide strong financial

support for the Institute. The Board expressed deep regret that, owing to financial constraints, the flagship publication of UNIDIR — *The Disarmament Forum* — ceased to exist in 2012, and provided advice on alternative ways to maintain high visibility of the Institute.

59. After considering the Institute report, the Board approved its submission to the General Assembly and recommended the continuing subvention from the United Nations regular budget for the biennium 2014-2015, while also reiterating its earlier recommendation (see A/66/125, para. 36, and A/67/203, para. 56) that the subvention level be increased, in addition to being cost adjusted, to "fully fund all core staff costs, as a requisite for providing the stability needed to allow the Institute to pursue the structure and programme of work justified by its vision and mission". The Board noted that in recent years the buying power of the subvention had decreased to a level that no longer supported even the costs of the Director, thus falling short of its original purpose.

60. Given that the contract of the current Director expires at the end of December 2014, the Board agreed on the establishment of a subgroup to manage the process of succession for the Director of UNIDIR, thus enabling the Board of Trustees as a whole to make recommendations to the Secretary-General on the appointment of a new Director, so that there is seamless continuity in the leadership of UNIDIR. This subgroup would operate in close coordination with the secretariat of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

VI. Future work

61. The Board exchanged views on a number of possible topics for discussion at its 2014 sessions, such as the role of the United Nations in nuclear security; cybersecurity and cyberwarfare; perspectives of ensuring survivability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the rapidly changing world; or perspectives for the international efforts to prevent the placement of arms in outer space.

62. The Board agreed to suggest as possible topics for 2014: (i) a continuation of the discussion on the disarmament and security implications of emerging technologies; and (ii) review of the value and prospects of the Non-proliferation Treaty process.

VII. Conclusion

63. At both its sessions in 2013, the Board was able to successfully conclude deliberations on the two items in its agenda. It provided a set of recommendations to the Secretary-General on the issue of the relations between nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing regional and global security and disarmament and security implications of emerging technologies. As the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Advisory Board spent considerable time looking into the research activities of the Institute, particularly the continuing serious funding challenges faced by UNIDIR, the change management reform and its impact on the autonomy and functioning of UNIDIR, as well as the succession of the Director of the Institute.

Annex

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Desmond Bowen[a] (Chair)
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